

THE ROLE OF ULTRASOUNDS IN PLANNING AND DEVELOPING AIRWAY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

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Ultrasounds represent one of great innovations in the field of medicine in the last century; thanks to technological development, instrumentation design and portability, they became widespread used in many fields of medicine, including anesthesia. Apart for consolidated role for central venous lines placement and for regional anesthesia, where they succeeded to reduce complication rate while increasing performance, they are now more and more frequently used also for airway management, for different purposes. They are powerful tools for second level airway assessment, with reference to evaluation of anatomy and difficult airway management prediction; they are also used for tube position confirmation (especially in the field of emergency), for cricothyroideal membrane identification, for evaluation of glottic diameter prior to extubation, for airway devices position evaluation (such as LMA), for tube size choice (especially in pediatric patients), for preprocedural evaluation during tracheostomy and for endobronchial diagnosis of lung pathology.

Principal applications of ultrasounds in airway management, including literature analysis and identification of evidence based indications are discussed.

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